

CIRM Shared Laboratory Grants Draw Strong Interest: \$48.5 million available for new research facilities in California.

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SAN FRANCISCO, February 5, 2007 - The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) received 25 letters of intent from non-profit and academic institutions across the state, seeking a share of the \$48.5 million available for the development of shared research labs for stem cell research. The Institute expects to award up to 15 grants over three years in June 2007.

The Shared Research Laboratory Grant Program will fund dedicated laboratory space for the culture of human embryonic stem cells (hESCs), particularly those that fall outside federal guidelines. (Current federal policy prohibits research involving hESCs isolated after August 2001 from being conducted in laboratories constructed with any federal funding.) CIRM's grants will support the development of core laboratories to be used by multiple investigators and shared by multiple institutions, and provide an environment for scientific research on hESCs under CIRM's medical and ethical standards.

The grants will provide funds for the design and renovation of laboratory space, equipment for the new research facilities, and operating expenses for three years. As many as five grants will include additional funds to train scientists and technical staff in the growth and maintenance of hESCs.

The program is part of the CIRM research grant initiative, *Innovation in Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research*, which is intended to advance human embryonic stem cell research in California. The initiative was approved by the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), CIRM's governing board, in August 2006, following California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's authorization of a \$150 million General Fund loan to the Institute. The ICOC will award CIRM's first non-training scientific research grants on February 16, 2007, and a second set of research grants in March.

CIRM requires applicant institutions to provide at least a 20 percent match of the total cost for renovation and equipment. They may request up to \$2 million for laboratory space development and an additional \$500,000 if they plan to offer a stem cell techniques training course. All academic and non-profit research institutions in California are eligible to apply.

CIRM's Scientific and Medical Research Funding Working Group will evaluate the scientific merit of each application, followed by a review of the laboratory construction components by its Scientific and Medical Facilities Working Group. The Working Groups will make funding recommendations to the ICOC, which has final authority to award all CIRM grants.

About CIRM

Governed by the ICOC, CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was approved by California voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. For more information, please visit <http://www.cirm.ca.gov>.

Contacts:	Dale A. Carlson
	415/396-9117

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